

Hobbies

'How do we know the coins we're buying are genuine?'

By Roger Boye

Here are answers to more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—We may buy a 1909-S VDB Lincoln cent. How can we be certain that the coin is genuine?

B.C., Elmhurst

A—You should do business with well-established dealers who can identify the fakes, who offer a 30-day return privilege and who guarantee to refund your money if the coin is proven to be bogus. Then you should submit the rarity to a coin-grading service for authentication.

Some forgers are so skilled at adding mint marks to coins that even long-time collectors are fooled. An authentic "S" on the 1909 cent usually shows distinct serifs—or cross strokes—at each end of the "S" with no hint of

handiwork around the letter. (A 1909 VDB cent without a mint mark retails for about \$3 in "very fine condition" while the 1909-S VDB goes for \$350.)

Q—Who would want blue coin folders made by Whitman? I've got about 40 of them, and some carry the original 35-cent price tags.

C.F., Chicago

A—Few coin dealers buy used Whitman folders. You might give the merchandise to a youth group to help spark some interest in coin collecting. New Whitman folders retail today for nearly \$2 each.

Q—Coin books list two varieties of 1979 proof sets—"Type I" and "Type II"—with no explanation. What's the difference?

C.B., Fort Wayne, Ind.

A—"Type I" has a filled "S"

mint mark on the Susan B. Anthony dollar, the letter a mere blob of metal. The "S" is clear and distinct on the dollar in a "Type II" set, which sells for about \$70 compared with \$10 retail for a "Type I."

Q—Is it worth our time to set aside from pocket change quarters with a drummer boy on the back side?

A.T., Chicago

A—No. Uncle Sam made nearly 1.7 billion such coins to help celebrate the Bicentennial in 1976, enough to satisfy collector demand for decades. Quarters dated 1776-1976 and produced for circulation contain copper and nickel, no silver.

Q—Are 1943 "steel pennies" worth anything? We took about 200 out of circulation in the 1960s.

R.T., Wheaton

A—Some dealers pay from two to four cents each for 1943 zinc-plated steel cents if the coins are rust-free. "Steelies" made in San Francisco wholesale for about 10 cents each.



Federal officials have trimmed prices on uncut sheets of currency, charging \$43—rather than \$46—for a 16-note sheet of \$2 bills rolled in a tube and \$44.50, rather than \$45, for the same sheet in a cardboard frame.

Other prices are \$45 for 32-note sheet of \$1 bills rolled in a tube and \$46 in a frame, and \$26 for 16-note sheet of \$1 bills in a tube and \$27.50 in a frame.

A four-note sheet of \$1 notes in an information folder remains \$10.25 and a four-note \$2 sheet remains \$14.75.

To order, send a check to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, P.O. Box 371594, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15250-7594. Orders received by Nov. 1 will be filled before Christmas.